LANDSBERGIS CRITICIZES ABOLISHMENT OF SECURITIES PROTECTION SERVICE

VILNIUS, Jul 10, BNS - The Lithuanian government's decision to abolish the securities protection service has created favorable conditions for all types fraud, says opposition leader Vytautas Landsbergis. Landsbergis told a news conference Monday that the service was abolished July 1 by a secret government resolution.

The opposition leader noted that the service, which used modern technologies and had a number of experienced experts, was capable of ensuring the production of well-protected passports, different types of forms, tax stamps and other documents.

OPTIMISM OVER ESTONIAN, LITHUANIAN ECONOMIES. Reuters and BNS on 11 July reported that the Estonian and Lithuanian economies are expected to grow this year but that Latvia is suffering from a banking crisis. The IMF estimates that Lithuania's GDP grew between 1-5% in 1994 and will increase by 5-7% this year. -- Ustina Markus, OMRI, Inc.

RIGA, July 13 (Reuter) - The Baltic states are doing the right thing by aiming to join the European Union as fast as possible although an entry date cannot be guaranteed, Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said on Thursday.

She said it was impossible to say how many of the countries now queuing for membership of the EU would be admitted in the enlargement process and by when.

``No one can really know how many members of the (European) Union there will be by the year 2000...but let us have high ambitions," she told a news conference at the end of a two-day working visit and meeting with Latvian counterpart, Valdis Birkavs.

``It's important now that the process continues and we will see them (the Baltic states) around the table of the EU as soon as possible," Hjelm-Wallen added. ``We will give all the support that we can to help this process," she said.